

later. I don't know if the Senator is wishing to close this body this evening? I am waiting for him to do so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

TRIBUTE TO PAT TILLMAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in November of 1864, when the "awful universe of battle" raged across America, President Abraham Lincoln paused to write a letter to one Mrs. Bixby, the mother of five sons serving in the Civil War.

Dear Madame, I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine that should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming.

But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

In the face of tragic death, it is beyond my capacity to conceive of the words that could justify the cause of freedom.

Yet with President Lincoln's words of 140 years ago, I cannot conceive of any better words to consecrate the cause of freedom in the face of such tragedy.

As long as freedom last, these words are immortal.

Every President and every leader in the free world since who has had to call upon their soldiers to defend freedom knows of Abe Lincoln's letter to widow Bixby.

Upon hearing of the death in combat of any of our fine young men and women in uniform, all leaders of freedom have searched for the right words and likely returned to those used by the Great Emancipator almost a century and a half ago for inspiration.

Eleven days ago, another costly sacrifice was laid upon the altar of freedom.

Today the people of San Jose, CA will gather to remember one of their honored fallen.

Pat Tillman was no different than any other soldier who served. Those who survive Pat Tillman grieve no differently than the survivors of any other soldier killed in freedom's cause.

Yet Pat Tillman embodies to a Nation the honor and duty of all those who serve in uniform.

Not every soldier is like Pat Tillman, but in each soldier, we find a little of the likes of Pat Tillman.

In my home state of Kentucky, the sacrifice for freedom is real and painful with the loss of too many fine young men.

On April 7, Staff Sergeant George S. Rentschler, 31, of Louisville was lost in action with the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad.

Marine Corporal Nicholas Dieruf, 21, of Lexington was killed in action in Husaybah on April 8.

Sergeant Major Michael B. Stack, 48, of Fort Campbell, serving with the 5th Special Forces Group was lost on April 11 in the al Anbar Province.

And 1st Lieutenant Robert L. Henderson II, 33, of Alvaton, serving with the Kentucky National Guard was killed in Diwanayah on April 17.

Each of these heroes volunteered knowing that one day they might be called upon for the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

Like Sergeant Rentschler, Corporal Dieruf, Sergeant Major Stack and Lieutenant Henderson, Pat Tillman heard the call and paid the sacrifice.

With our fallen Kentucky natives, he joins that band of brothers, that noble breed of volunteer militia who so long ago picked up the musket so that freedom might find one sanctuary here on Earth.

Where his forefathers put down their hoe in a cornfield, he put down his helmet on a football field and walked onto the battlefield of freedom.

In dedicating the final resting place of those who died at Gettysburg, President Lincoln stated

But in a large sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.

President Lincoln concluded:

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave their last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Mr. President, the sacrifice of Pat Tillman—like all those who serve and perish in our Nation's duty, has consecrated the cause of freedom far greater than our words could ever do.

From the last full measure of devotion he gave for a new birth of freedom, it is we who must dedicate ourselves to the unfinished business of government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

THE PROPER ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN IRAQ

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for many months the President's critics have asserted the situation in Iraq would improve if only the administra-

tion would cede control over the reconstruction and democratization of Iraq to the United Nations.

While the presumptive Democratic nominee, Senator Kerry, has yet to offer a detailed plan for Iraq, he has made it abundantly clear it involves transferring a significant measure of authority to the U.N. In fact, on December 3rd of last year, he noted:

Our best option for success is to go back to the United Nations and leave no doubt that we are prepared to put the United Nations in charge of the reconstruction and governance-building processes. I believe the prospects for success on the ground will be far greater if Ambassador Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority are replaced by a U.N. Special Representative for Iraq.

The U.N. is an immensely valuable organization, and America's significant contributions to the U.N. are a worthwhile investment. The U.N. is often the only entity that can bring international humanitarian relief to needy and impoverished societies across the globe, and its employees and volunteers deserve the highest praise for their selfless acts to bring comfort to the downtrodden.

When civil authorities in dysfunctional states collapse, the U.N. has sometimes averted humanitarian disaster. It can bring relief to failed states in isolated backwaters of the world where the major powers are unlikely to intervene themselves.

The U.N. in such cases plays a critical role and deserves our support for its important efforts. But the United Nations is not a blue-helmeted knight here to slay the dragons of aggression and evil. When the stakes are high and the threat of violence is real, the United States is too often helpless in the face of danger.

Before I turn my attention to the specific reason that Americans should be wary of abandoning Iraq to the United Nations, let me dispel a myth about the administration's foreign policy.

The President's critics often refer to America's efforts in Iraq as unilateralist. This politically expedient fix is an insult to the thousands of men and women from the 30-plus countries who are risking their lives to bring peace and democracy to the people of Iraq. If the President's critics still believe his policy to be a go-it-alone approach, let them repeat that assertion to the families of the Italian, Spanish, Polish, British, Danish, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Thai, Estonian, South Korean, Japanese, and Salvadoran soldiers and aid workers who have given their lives in Iraq.

Some say United Nations oversight in Iraq would confer legitimacy to the coalition's occupation and reconstruction of that country. I find that hard to believe. Given its role in sustaining the Saddam Hussein regime via the alleged mismanagement of the Oil for Food Program and the refusal to enforce its own resolutions, the United Nations is not in a position to lend legitimacy to a free Iraq. In fact, I think it could be